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'Marg - My 10 years with Bridge Housing'

Marg has been a tenant with Bridge Housing since 2009, although she has lived in her unit much longer than that – 51 years to be precise! Prior to Bridge Marg was a public housing tenant. Marg kindly agreed to be interviewed for the newsletter and share her experiences living in social housing.

Q. Could you tell us a little about yourself?

A. In 1968, I moved into this unit and rented from the NSW Housing Commission with my husband and first son, with the arrival of my second son following soon after. I have worked in aged care since I was 17 and recently retired in 2012. I love to read, watch plays, attend concerts and watch movies. Frequently I go to the St Andrews Cathedral to see the Police Band and Navy Band which I enjoy. Often I visit the local library as they hold many events and have computers for community use.

Q. How was the transition from the Department of Community and Justice to Bridge Housing Limited?

A. The change felt out of the blue and it was a very worrying beginning for a lot of us living here. Many of us were scared that we would be displaced. John, the CEO, met with and spoke to tenants about the transition and provided us with information. As November 2019 signals the anniversary of Bridge Housing managing this property, I've realised that Bridge Housing did exactly what they said they would.

Q. Marg, you're a TAG (Tenant Advisory Group) member, what do you like about the TAG meetings?

A. I joined the East TAG meetings following my retirement in 2012 and

was surprised to learn how diverse our housing system is. For example, live in properties owned by Bridge Housing, by the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) or that are rented through the private market. I enjoy listening to the thoughts and opinions of other residents and enjoy when guest speakers are invited to attend. Just the other week I attended the end of year East TAG lunch and it was an amazing lunch where everyone could get together and reflect on the past year.

Q. What kind of support do you have from your friends and family?

A. My family and friends provide me with lots of support. I have two sons, one lives with his family in Newcastle and the other lives in Ireland with his family. I'm very grateful for my family, my son that lives in Ireland often visits every 2 years and I quite often go to Newcastle for a visit every other weekend. When we can, I attend the local cinema with a close friend of mine.

Q. How do you take care of yourself through busy or difficult times?

A. My unit is overlooking this lovely park with a long path that leads to the local shopping centre. Almost daily, I walk down this path, to get to the library, where I often read, listen to guest speakers and use the computer. I want to stay healthy because the healthier I am, the more time



Marg

I have to enjoy my life. Wellbeing for me is about keeping yourself fit and healthy and mindfully taking care of yourself.

Q. What is in the future for you Marg?

A. I have droopy eyebrows and they tend to block my vision while I am walking. I am currently on the waitlist for surgery but once the surgery is completed, I would love to join a local walking group as it is something I enjoy doing. In the meantime, I am happy to continue my life in the same way, going to historical talks, attending concerts and being involved in some East TAG activities.

General Enquiries - 8324 0800
customerservice@bridgehousing.org.au

Repairs - 8324 0886
repairs@bridgehousing.org.au

Community - 8324 0827
community@bridgehousing.org.au

Housing Pathways Applications
8324 0890
pathways@bridgehousing.org.au

Housing Team & Tenancies
8324 0885
customerservice@bridgehousing.org.au

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CEO Update

Welcome to the Summer 2019-20 edition of Our Place. As the old adage goes, time flies! It is hard to believe that it is already December and that the festive season is well and truly upon us.

As we look back on 2019, Bridge Housing went through a significant period of change and growth. We have welcomed our new tenants and staff on the Northern Beaches, opened our new office in Brookvale and increased the number of properties we managed from 2,244 to 3,560. Despite these changes, our tenants remain at the heart of everything we do – and we remain as committed as ever to our mission of delivering quality homes and services.

When I contemplate the meaning of change, I think about its relationship to wellbeing. Change can be exciting, especially when it presents new opportunities – but sometimes, change can be more difficult to work through. When times are tough, it can be helpful to think about how we can take care of ourselves. Sharing connections, neighbourly interactions, celebrating success and supporting each other through failures are some of the things that can make a difference.

Over the last few weeks, it has been fantastic to see so many residents at the Christmas Party and the 2019 Annual General Meeting, where we celebrated our organisational achievements. Thank you very much to everyone who attended these events. We greatly value being able to connect with our tenant community.

If you are interested in getting involved in the Bridge Housing community in 2020, please speak to one of our staff in the Communities team by calling 02 8324 0800 or visit our website for more information. On behalf of everyone at Bridge Housing, we hope that you have a safe and happy festive season!

John Nicolades, CEO



Bridge To Work

The Bridge To Work program, a partnership between Bridge Housing Limited and CoAct, continues to build momentum. The end of October marked the end of the first 15 month pilot. During this time the Employment Support Coordinator, Gavin, reached 80 formal engagements, and of these:

31	(39%) were placed in employment
7	(9%) returned to full time study
8	(10%) were currently interviewing for jobs at the end of the pilot
30	(37%) exited the program without a placement
4	(5%) were active in the program but had not yet been placed into employment.

If you are interested in finding out more about the program; or you want to have a chat about returning to work, study or what options might be available for you; please call Sam, who has taken over from Gavin in the Employment Support Coordinator role, on 0447 092 194 or by emailing S.Belhajji@bridgehousing.org.au.

Water Restrictions from December 10 2019

Sydney Water has announced that from 10 December 2019 Level 2 water restrictions will apply in Sydney. What does this mean? Under these restrictions:

- ▶ You can only water your gardens before 10am or after 4pm with either a watering can or bucket.
- ▶ You can only wash your vehicles using a bucket and sponge.
- ▶ You cannot use a hose at all.

Failure to follow these guidelines could result in fines of up to \$220. So stay water wise this summer and abide by the restrictions to ensure there is enough water for everyone to use.

Tips for managing community garden during a drought period include using good quality mulch to promote water retention and enable soil to hold nutrients better, collect water wherever you can (a bucket in your shower or bathwater are good opportunities) and choose drought tolerant plants that have interesting texture and foliage rather than water-hungry flowers.



The Good Neighbour Champions



The Good Neighbour Champions program has officially been launched! We have received 9 nominations so far that highlight what it means to go above and beyond to support neighbours and the community. For example, a couple in Manly Vale were nominated by their neighbours for checking in on them if they had not seen them in a while to ensure their safety.

Do you have an amazing Bridge Housing Neighbour who:

- ▶ Does a great job taking care of the common areas?
- ▶ Helps keep the gardens at your block beautiful?
- ▶ Goes above and beyond to help other people?
- ▶ Is a great neighbour to have around?
- ▶ Contributes to creating a positive community to live in?
- ▶ Is a Bin legend?

If the answer is yes, you can nominate a good neighbour to go in the running to become a Block Champion and receive a \$50 gift card! Download the nomination form at www.bridgehousing.org.au or contact us via email at community@bridgehousing.org.au or phone **8324 0800**.

Bridge Buddies

Have you heard about Bridge Buddies yet? Bridge Buddies is a way for tenants to make new friends and reduce isolation in the community. It's also a way for new tenants to learn more about the programs and services Bridge Housing offers, from existing experienced tenants. Buddies are matched by staff according to their interests, availability and preferred contact method (telephone, email, in person, etc.).



For more information or an application form please contact the Community Team on **02 8324 0800** or community@bridgehousing.org.au.

NSW Police Next of Kin Program

A free program designed for those that live alone to register their personal details with their local Police Station in the case of an emergency. The register holds information including a Next of Kin contact, doctor and dentist details and any medical alerts. The program enables the Next of Kin to be contacted and informed of a situation should it arise. To register, go to your local police station or go online at https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/572394/next-of-kin-program-application-form.pdf.

Yabun Festival, Victoria Park, Camperdown on Sunday 26 January

Yabun Festival is the largest one day gathering and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia, held annually on 26th of January upon the traditional lands of the Gadigal people in Sydney. Established in 2001, Yabun (meaning 'music to a beat' in Gadigal language) is a free event that features live music, a bustling stalls market, panel discussions and community forums on Aboriginal issues, children's activities, and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural performances. Yabun Festival welcomes everyone to join us in this one of a kind event which honours the survival of the world's oldest living culture. Bridge Housing will also have a stall and we would love you to come and say hi!

Where: Victoria Park, Camperdown

When: Sunday 26 January 2020

Cost: Free



Sarah and Megan

Tenant End Of Year Celebration at Taronga Zoo

On Saturday 23 November, over 140 tenants attended the End of Year Tenant Celebration at Taronga Zoo Function Centre. We had a buffet lunch and kids entertainment and tenants had the chance to explore the zoo after lunch. Here are some photos from the event.



Hugh, Kamal and Mel



Frances, John, Theo and Monique



Isaac, Virginia and Lorna

City of Sydney Community Christmas Lunch

Monday 25 December from 9am (service starts) to 1pm
117 Young St, Redfern NSW 2016

Join City of Sydney at one1seven Church, 117 Young Street in Redfern, for a Christmas Day Service and community lunch for anybody and everybody.

City of Sydney will distribute Christmas Hampers and after the service share a delicious Christmas Lunch - and it'll all be free. Bookings essential for catering purposes. Go to City of Sydney What's on website page to book your spot: <https://whatson.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/events/christmas-day-service-and-community-lunch>.

Wayside Chapel Christmas Lunch

Wayside Chapel will host two free parties on Christmas Day.

10.30 - 2.00pm - Christmas service and free lunch at
Hughes St, Potts Point

10.30 - 2.30pm - Christmas service, bingo and free lunch at
Bondi Life Saving Club, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Bondi Beach.

Salvation Army Christmas Meal

Christmas service and lunch - Earlwood

10:00am-1:30pm | 25 December 2019
58 Earlwood Ave, EARLWOOD NSW 2206 - View on map

Join us for our Christmas Celebration Service. Christmas Lunch will be provided after the service.

Salvation Army Christmas Lunch - Bankstown

11:00am-1:15pm | 25 December 2019
42 Raymond St, BANKSTOWN NSW 2200 - View on map

We provide a free Christmas lunch for those going through hardship.

Salvation Army Christmas Lunch - Hornsby

12pm-2pm | 25 December 2019
29-31 Burdett Street, HORNSBY NSW 2077 - View on map

Please RSVP to 02 9477 1133.

Season's Greetings from Bridge Housing

Bridge Housing would like to thank all our tenants for your fantastic contributions to Bridge Housing and local communities this year. Whatever it is that you do to enjoy the holidays, we wish you a very happy, safe and joyous time with your loved ones.



Our Place

Bridge Housing Tenant Advisory Groups



The Tenant Advisory Groups (TAG) are made up of Bridge Housing tenants who volunteer their time to give back to the tenant community and provide feedback to help Bridge Housing improve the way we do things.

Bridge Housing currently has six tenant groups that meet regularly. Come along and participate. Details of the next meetings are:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAG (ATTAG) Meeting Dates:
Redfern Community Centre Activity Room from 10AM - 12PM
RSVP to the Community Team on 8324 0800

27 February 2020



Bankstown TAG Meeting Dates:
Yagoona Community Centre, 176 Cooper Road, Yagoona from 11AM - 1PM
RSVP to The Community Team on 8324 0800

10 March 2020



Central TAG Meeting Dates:
Redfern Oval Community Hall, Chalmers St Redfern, opposite Woollies from 10:00AM - 12:00PM
RSVP to Rodney Hollis 0419 260 336

7 February 2020



East TAG Meeting Dates:
Margaret Whitlam Centre, Waverley Park on Bondi Rd, Bondi Junction from 10:00AM - 12:00PM
RSVP to Julia Nunes 0423 451 188

27 March 2020



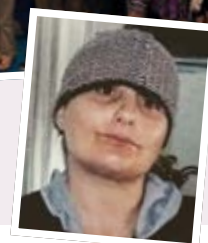
Vietnamese (VNTAG) Meeting Dates:
Bridge Housing Office, L9, 59 Goulburn St, Haymarket from 11AM - 1PM
RSVP to the Community Team on 8324 0800

12 February 2020



West TAG Meeting Dates:
Lidcombe Community Centre, 3 Bridge Street, Lidcombe from 10:30AM - 12:30PM
RSVP to the Community Team on 8324 0800

13 March 2020



Interested in becoming a member?

If you are interested in becoming a member of the TAG, contact the Community Team to register your interest. Call **02 8324 0800** or email community@bridgehousing.org.au. You can also complete a Get Involved Brochure from our website: <https://www.bridgehousing.org.au/documents/975-bhl0155-tenant-participation-a4-brochure-v2/file>

Are you a Northern Beaches resident?

If you are a Northern Beaches resident interested in joining a TAG or leading a Tenant Group in your area, please let the Community Team know by emailing community@bridgehousing.org.au or calling the office on 8324 0800.

What's On

Where to find the best Christmas displays:

- ▲ East Sydney: North Bondi (Waratah St), Bondi (Avoca St), Kingsford (Eastern Av), Maroubra (Malabar Rd) and Matraville (Knowles Av).
- ▲ West Sydney: Greystanes (Camellia St and Harris St), Guilford (Strickland Rd and Vulcan St), Concord (Burwood Rd), Kellyville (Arnold Av, Mawarra Cr, Litchfield Av and Karinya Pl)
- ▲ Northern Beaches: Balgowlah (Ernest St), Curl Curl (Abbott Rd), Manly (Stuart St) and Narrabeen (Gondola Rd).

Intergenerational Play for All Ages:

Ageless Play sessions give children, parents and seniors the opportunity to engage, build relationships and play in a safe space. Volunteer in your community this New Year! Find more information at agelessplay.com.au.

Become a Coastal Ranger this summer in Narrabeen:

Visit the Coastal Environment Centre in Narrabeen to a range of fun-filled activities during the school holidays: <https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/environment/coastal-environment-centre/school-holiday-program>.



Enjoy a night under the stars in Parramatta:

Sydney Festival returns to Parramatta Park in 2020 with the free event Sydney Symphony. Join gather friends and family for an evening of music in the park, including a fantastic fireworks show! <https://www.sydneyfestival.org.au/events/sydney-symphony>.

Outdoor Cinemas:

- ▲ Village Green (North), Darling Quarter, 1-25 Harbour St, Sydney
Thursday 9 January to Saturday 25 January
<https://darlingquarter.com/play/night-owls-2020/>
- ▲ Cathy Freeman Park, Sydney Olympic Park
Saturday 4 January to Sunday 19 January
<http://outdoorcinemaatsydneyolympicpark.com.au/>

BHL Opening Hours & Location

Christmas New Year Operating Hours

Bridge Housing's Head Office at Goulburn Street is closed from 4 December - 2 January 2020. For urgent assistance call the out of hours contact centre on **8324 0800**.

The Northern Beaches office at Brookvale office is open for homelessness assistance only from Friday 27 December - 2 January. Northern Beaches tenants with urgent maintenance and repair services should call the Contractor Call Centre on **1800 422 322**.

Goulburn Street Office

You can find our Head Office at Level 9, 59 Goulburn Street Haymarket. When visiting the Goulburn Street office, please use the lifts that face the street to get to Level 9.

We are open 9am - 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday.

Brookvale Office

You can find our new Brookvale Office at Level 1, 660-664 Pittwater Road, and Brookvale. When visiting the Brookvale office you can take the lift or the stairs from outside Centrelink.

We are open 9am - 4:30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday.

Outreach Times and Locations

Mill Hill Outreach

Waverley Council
1st Floor, 31-33 Spring St.
Bondi Junction 2022
Hours: Thursday 1.30pm - 4.00pm

South Coogee Outreach

3 Yamba Place
South Coogee 2034
Hours: Thursday 9.30am to 12.00pm